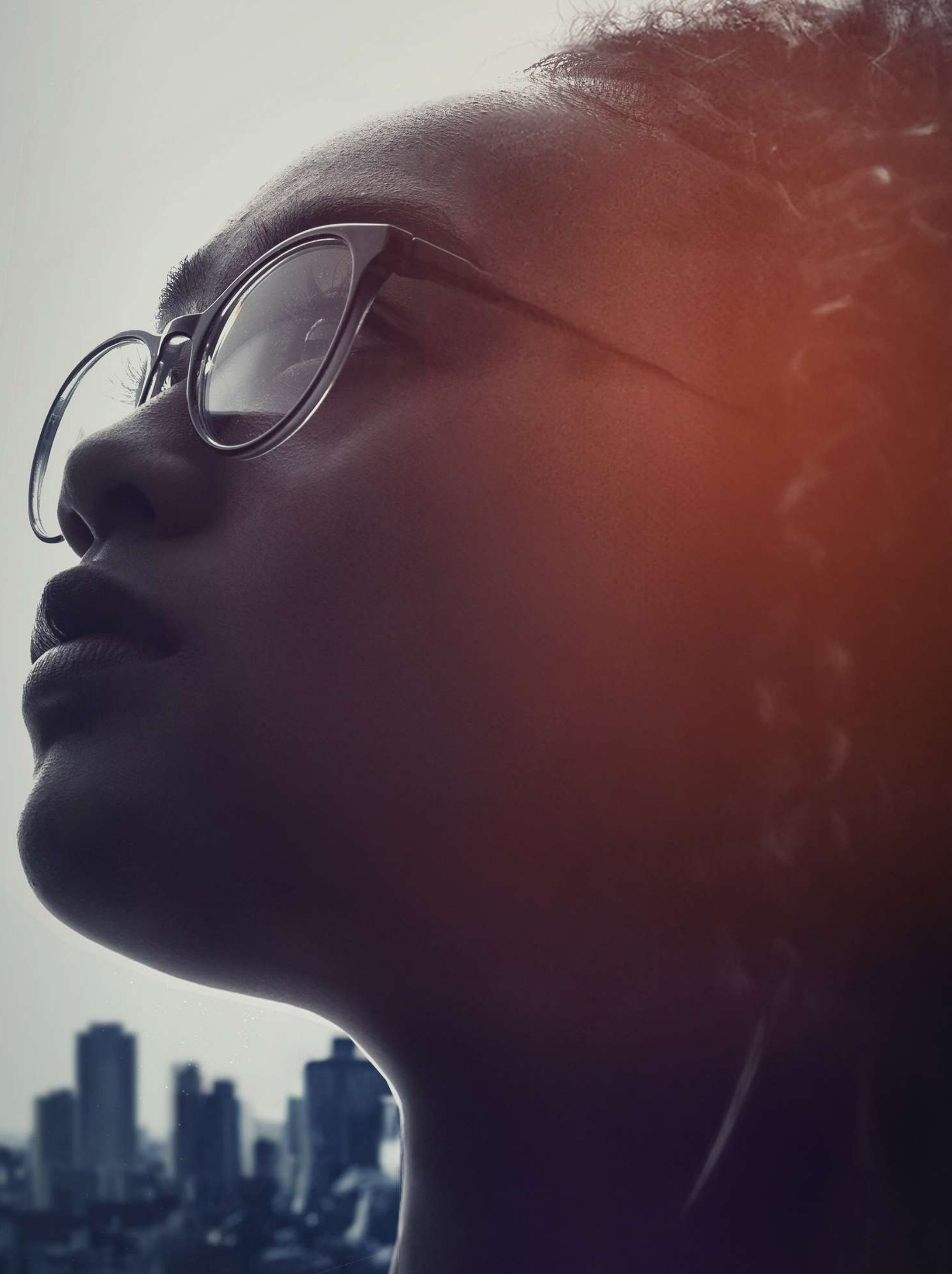




THE DCO'S UNIFIED FRAMEWORK FOR **EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AND THROUGH ICT**

The comprehensive Unified Framework aspires to enable, enhance, and accelerate the design and implementation of initiatives for empowering women globally. It embraces a pragmatic and structured approach with a rigorous focus on execution to drive continuous results for the concerned stakeholders.



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INTRODUCTION

With the rapid advancement of technology and the ever-changing emerging technology landscape, there has been an increase in gender inequality in the digital economy. This can be attributed to unequal access, lack of awareness, and online security issues, amongst other barriers. According to a United Nations (UN) report¹, women are seen to make up only two in every ten Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) jobs and comprise just 33% of the workforce in the top 20 largest technology companies. Omitting women from the digital economy has trimmed USD 1 trillion from the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of low-and middle-income nations in the past decade. This loss is expected to grow to USD 1.5 trillion by 2025, unless corrective action is taken earnestly.² On the flip side, achieving gender equality has a potential to add USD 12 trillion to the global economy.³

Recognizing the current gap and acknowledging the significant potential for digital economy growth through the empowerment of women, several efforts and initiatives have been directed toward women globally and within the DCO Member States. However, the absence of a cohesive framework has been noted, one that would offer a robust structure for the identification, planning, and implementation of high-impact initiatives, especially to 'empower women in and through Information and Communication Technologies (ICT)'.

¹ https://www.unwomen.org/sites/default/files/09-2022/Progress-on-the-sustainable-development-goals-the-gender-snapshot-2022-en_0.pdf
² <https://unric.org/en/international-womens-day-2023/#:~:text=According%20to%20UN%20Women%2C%20women's,trillion%20by%20%202025without%20action>
³ International Labour Organization; <https://weps-gapanalysis.org/case-for-gender-equality/>





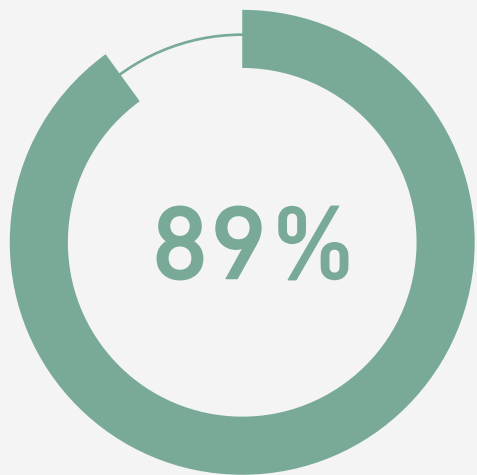
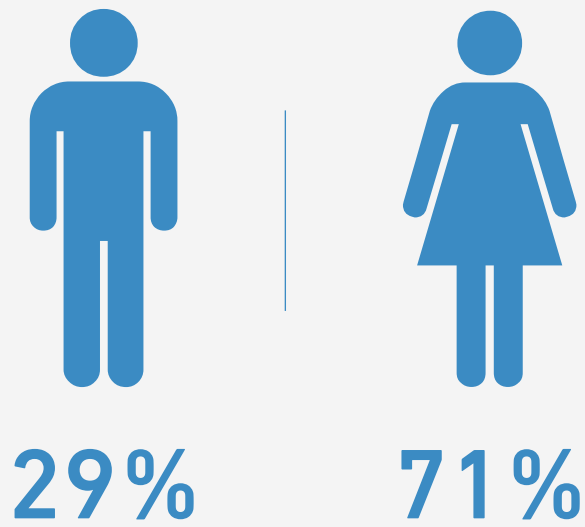
To address this gap, the DCO has developed a Unified Framework on ‘Empowering Women in and through ICT’. The framework aims to act as a tool and a structured guide to serve governments, corporates, NGOs, and multilateral organizations that are evaluating impactful initiatives and/or developing actionable recommendations to enhance women’s participation in the digital economy.

Women empowerment in the digital economy can be looked at through multiple lenses, and accordingly the initiatives to empower women in and through ICT can focus on different objectives. The unified framework outlines several dimensions and details various aspects across demographics, socio-economic profiles, economic brackets, age groups etc., that are relevant to driving women's participation in the digital economy. Initiatives created using this framework can target specific geographies, socio-economic groups, age groups, challenges, sectors, UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) and national/organizational goals and objectives. The initiatives can also address different stakeholders and need-varied enablers. The framework is flexible enough to accommodate different contexts and needs while providing a clear structure for planning and execution of the initiatives.

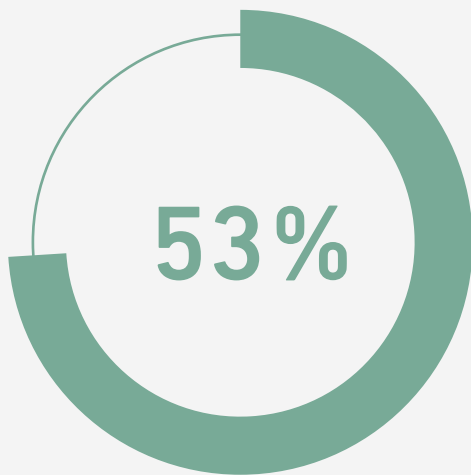
INSIGHTS FROM GLOBAL SURVEY ON EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AND THROUGH ICT

The Unified Framework has been curated and designed through a research-led, collaborative process by engaging with a diverse range of concerned stakeholders. A thorough primary and secondary research was conducted, that incorporates insights and feedback from multiple sources. This includes input from experts across different organizations based on a global survey, a series of global roundtable discussions, and a panel of global experts consulted on women's empowerment. As part of the secondary research, learnings from various credible sources including UNCTAD, European Training Foundation, and UN Women etc. were synthesized.

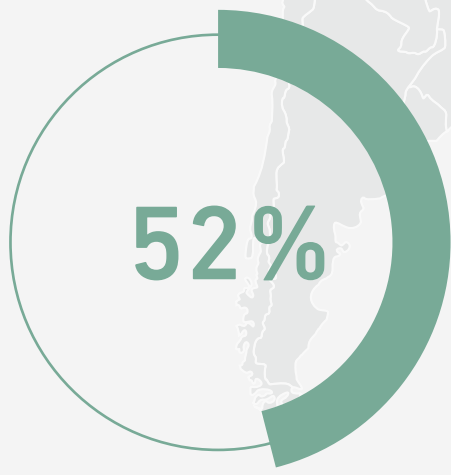
SURVEY RESPONDENTS



Women in their country have moderate to high access to technology



Top challenges identified are work-life balance, gender bias, and limited female representation



Believe women in their nation do not have access to digital literacy programs or are neutral/unaware



4 IMPORTANT STAKEHOLDERS IN RELATION TO EMPOWERING WOMEN IN AND THROUGH ICT

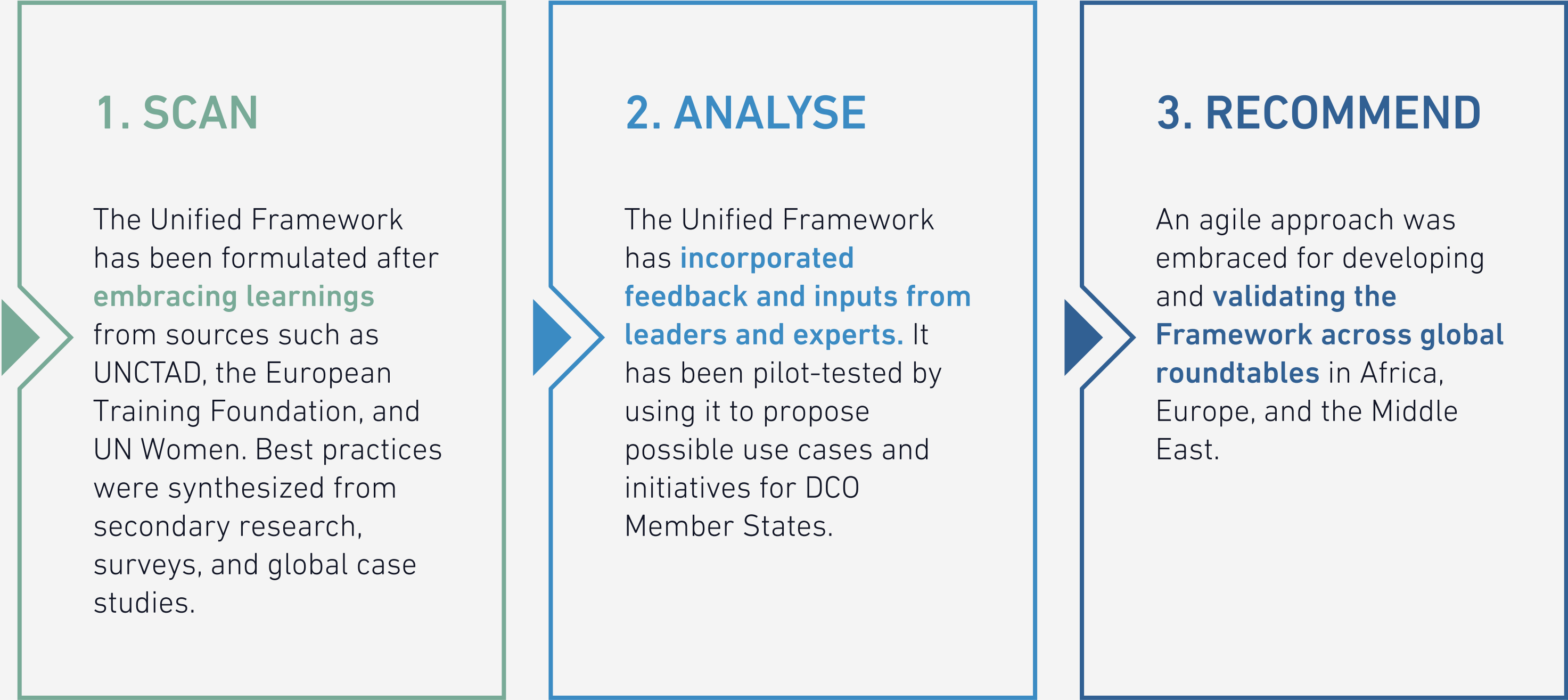
1. Policymakers/Regulators
2. Corporates
3. Support structure and caregivers (including family)
4. Leaders/Managers

OVERVIEW OF THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK

The Unified Framework aims to be a structured enabler for accelerating the planning and implementation of initiatives for empowering women globally. It focuses on providing a holistic, transparent, and targeted view of the initiatives for driving early and consistent results.



METHODOLOGY AND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS



KEY DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS OF THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK



SCOPE

The framework aims to act as a tool and a structured guide to serve governments, corporates, NGOs, and multilateral organizations evaluating impactful initiatives or developing actionable recommendations across demographics, socio-economic profiles, and economic brackets for driving women's empowerment in the digital economy.



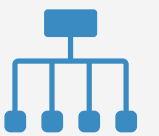
CUSTOMIZATION

The Framework actively considers the lenses through which certain challenges are addressed and enablers are implemented based on the target groups selected and the stakeholders defined. Highlighting the lenses through which the initiatives are formulated allows for the selected initiative(s) to be more customized and focused.



RESEARCH-LED

The designed framework incorporates insights and feedback from the relevant digital economy leaders and experts. This includes input from experts across different organizations based on a global survey, a series of global roundtable discussions, and a panel of global experts consulted on women's empowerment.



CONTEXTUAL

The framework includes the ability to map the lenses and categories across a high, medium, and low scale with quantitative and qualitative ranking to understand the relevance and applicability of various factors based on the context in which the framework is applied.



HOLISTIC

The framework includes broad-based lenses such as socio-economic and cultural factors in the challenges categories and several stakeholder engagements (family, organizations, government) in the enablers categories to provide a holistic perspective and a definitive starting point for deep dive assessment.



DYNAMIC
















The sectors and sub-sectors included in the framework are dynamic and will continue to evolve based on the nature of technology, specifically for the emerging technologies. Consequently, the framework will continue to be updated periodically based on the evolving context.



THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK

The framework aims to act as a canvas for unpacking potential initiatives and action recommendations for those working to solve key challenges facing women's empowerment in and through ICT. The subsequent sections explain how this framework can be leveraged for achieving a more layered and nuanced understanding of different facets of the possible initiatives using various 'Lenses', and 'Categories' under those lenses.

THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK

	Coverage and Scope	Global			Regional			National			Sub-national			Local						
	Geographical Landscape	Middle East and North Africa	Sub-Saharan Africa		South Asia		East Asia and Pacific		Europe and Central Asia		North America		Latin America and Caribbean		Others	All (Global)				
	Economic and Human Capital Status	Income			Urban/Rural			Education and Skills			Health and Nutrition			Socio-cultural Factors						
	Sectors Impacted	Agriculture	Education		Energy and Extractives		Financial Sector		Healthcare		Manufacturing and Production		Consumer Industries		Technology and ICT		Government and Public Services	Others	All	
	Target Groups and Influencing Groups	Students	Unemployed	Self-employed	Employed	Investors	Leaders / Managers	Entrepreneurs	Governments and Regulators	Multilateral Organizations	Private Organizations	Support structure /caregivers (including family)		Educational Institutions						
	Age Groups	5-12 (Child)			13-18 (Adolescence)			19-30 (Young Adult)			31-45 (Adult)			46-64 (Middle Age)			65 and above (Senior)			
	Nature of Work and Seniority	Internship		Trainee		Entry-level		Mid-level management		Senior-level management		Executive			Entrepreneur					
	Gaps and Challenges Observed	Financial inclusion	Workforce inclusion		Skills and knowledge		Funding		Leadership inclusion		Gender bias		Access and Digital Divide		Cybersecurity		Socio-economic, Cultural factors		Legislation and Regulation	Others
	Implementation Medium/Channel	Digital (Virtual) Website, Mobile App, Platform, Social Media etc.						Phygital (Physical and Digital) Hybrid Channels						Physical (Offline) In-person Channels						
	Enablers	Family and community support	Funding	Healthcare access	Networking and mentorship	Partnerships	Policy, regulation, and advocacy	Government support / incentives	Incubators/ Accelerators	Digital Public Goods and Infrastructure	Childcare support	Education/ Literacy	Cultural factors	Others						
	Deliverables	Research and White Papers	Education programs	Toolkits and platforms	Leadership Development programs	Scholarship and grants	Incubator programs	Government support / incentives	Impact Funds and Social VC	Recognition and awards	National strategies, policies and regulations		Workplace diversity programs		Gender inclusive AI/ML models					
	Funding Magnitude and Sources	Development Banks	Public-Private Partnerships (PPP)		Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)		Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)		Philanthropic Foundations		Multilateral Organizations		Government Grants		Impact Accelerators/ Incubators		Crowdfunding		Others	
	UNSDGs Impacted	3 – Good Health and Well-being		4 – Quality Education		5 – Gender Equality		8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth		9 – Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure		10 – Reduced Inequalities		11 – Sustainable Cities and Communities		16 – Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions		17 – Partnership for the goals		
	National/ Organizational Goals and Objectives Impacted	Economic Equity and Inclusion		Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship		Job Creation and Employment		Cooperation on Development Assistance		Diversity and Inclusion		Thriving Cross-Border Digital Market		Data-Driven Digital Economy		Responsible Digital Economy		Others		
	Operationalize and Measure	Key Activities		Timelines		Stakeholders		Teams		Contingencies		Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)		Milestones		Reporting and Monitoring		Outcomes		

Lenses and Categories of the Unified Framework

KEY QUESTIONS TO LEVERAGE THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK FOR DESIGNING INITIATIVES

The different facets of the framework and how it intends to offer a holistic perspective on including the key considerations for designing impactful initiative(s) are depicted below: It is important to note the questions in points 1 to 8 aim at studying the current state of play in the focus area(s) for which the initiatives are to be designed, while from 9 to 15 aim at designing the actual initiatives to the solve challenges identified within the focus area.

1. Coverage and Scope What is the scale of the government, corporate, NGO, or multilateral organization? Where is their presence and interest? What will be the coverage area and scope of the initiative?	2. Geographical Landscape Which region/country is being targeted for initiative(s)?	3. Economic and Human Capital Status How is the target region placed in terms of its income, literacy levels, and women's economic inclusion?	4. Sectors Impacted Which sector(s) need support? Which sector(s) are the initiatives for?	5. Target Groups and Influencing Groups What are the target and influencing group(s)? How are they positioned in terms of women's empowerment? Which groups are marginalized and need support?
6. Age Groups What is the target age group? Which age groups do the challenges affect?	7. Nature of Work and Seniority What stage of their career are the target groups in and what is their nature of work?	8. Gaps and Challenges Observed What are the key challenges being faced? What is the identified cause of the challenge? How will the initiative(s) address one or more of these challenges?	9. Implementation Medium/Channel How can the challenges be addressed? What medium and channel is most suited?	10. Enablers What enablers could be used to solve the challenges, based on the medium and channel chosen?
11. Deliverables How best could the impact be delivered, and in what form? What is the tangible output?	12. Funding Magnitude and Sources How much funding is required to meet the desired scale? Who will fund the action?	13. UNSDGs Impacted Is the initiative aligned to the UNSDGs? Which SDG(s) does it support, and how can it help accelerating the progress on SGDs?	14. National/ Organizational Goals and Objectives Impacted Is the initiative aligned with the national/ organization's goals and objectives? (e.g., for DCO, what is the alignment with the 2030 Strategic Roadmap?)	15. Operationalize and Measure How can the initiative be brought to life? How can the impact and progress be measured?

THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK LENSES AND CATEGORIES | A DEEP DIVE (1/5)

This section presents various lenses and categories that are included in the unified framework and explains their significance in formulating high-impact initiatives for women empowerment in and through ICT.


PURPOSE

REASONING

CATEGORIES

1

Coverage and Scope




'Coverage and scope' lens provides guidance on the level at which an entity e.g., a government, corporate, NGO, or multilateral organization intends to roll-out and scale the planned initiative(s).

Set a coverage and scope range to address women's empowerment-related issues in the digital economy based on the presence and interest(s) of a government, corporate, NGO, or multilateral organization that aims to design and deliver the initiative(s).

The categories under this lens can be a Global, Regional, National, Sub-national, or Local based on an organization's presence and/or interest e.g., a state-level government organization is looking to develop initiative(s) for targeted support at a micro scale with local coverage.

2

Geographical Landscape




'Geographic landscape' is a guiding lens to identify which region to short-list for implementing the initiative(s).

Study women's empowerment-related issues globally and narrow down a region that requires intervention to solve specific challenges and gaps. While targeting a region, understand the socio-economic outlook of the region from a gender lens and study factors like reported internet and mobile penetration, education levels, demographic factors, workforce participation, financial inclusion, political freedom, and cultural norms, among others, which are affecting the women.

Middle East and North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, South Asia, Europe and Central Asia, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean could be identified as geographic categories based on globally bucketed regions as acknowledged by leading international organizations such as the World Bank, OECD, World Economic Forum, UN, amongst others. The categories can narrow down the region or the country/city/town/village within an area to specify the scope of an initiative or action. However, some organizations/individuals may be solving global and systemic problems without targeting a specific landscape; in this case, more than one or all regions shall be in scope.

3

Economic and Human Capital Status



'Economic and human capital status' is a guiding lens to understand which economic group(s) to target, along with their GDP, income, lifestyle, economic activity, investment, propensity to spend and save, and other similar monetary economic factors, and to gauge the maturity of human capital for the target groups e.g., literary levels, and skills of the women in the identified region.

Evaluate the economic and human capital landscape of the target regions. Understand the nuances of the region and the role women and girls play in the economy.

Broader categories under this lens could be income, urban/rural, education and skills, health and nutrition, and sub-cultural factors. While we break up the economic and human capital landscape into income group categorization outlined by the World Bank⁴ across low-income, lower-middle-income, upper-middle-income, and high-income sub-categories among both the urban and the rural dwellers, it is essential to keep in mind that there are further nuances such as consumption, saving, investment, lifestyle, capital accumulation, etc. that could be considered. Within these categories it is important to study the current state of human capital across rural and urban areas. Literacy can be mapped to the OECD's defined 6 literacy levels⁵. The categories mentioned above are only the starting point to pinpoint at a high-level the target segment(s) for which initiative(s) are being proposed.

⁴ <https://blogs.worldbank.org/opendata/new-world-bank-group-country-classifications-income-level-fy24>

⁵ <https://literacytrust.org.uk/parents-and-families/adult-literacy/what-do-adult-literacy-levels-mean/>

THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK **LENSES AND CATEGORIES** | A DEEP DIVE (2/5)

PURPOSE

REASONING

CATEGORIES

4 Sectors Impacted

'Sectors impacted' is a guiding lens that could be used to understand the sector specific needs and challenges for women-empowerment and to focus the initiative(s) that could address those challenges across various sectors.

Understand which sectors, need intervention and support to empower women within those sectors through ICT.

The categories include different sectors across the range of primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors, e.g. In the short-listed region, and based on the economic and human capital status, we identify maternity care support to be inadequate in the region of interest, thus, healthcare sector could be short-listed for intervention.

5 Target Groups and Influencing Groups

'Target and influencing groups' is a guiding lens to identify the target group(s) that stand to benefit and group(s) that influence the planning and implementation of the possible initiative(s).

Based on the region, economic and human capital landscape, and sectors impacted, identify the key target groups that are marginalized or need support on account of the challenges/ empowerment gaps they face. Also identify the stakeholders that may influence the proposed initiative(s).

The categories under this lens identify the target group(s) for the initiative(s) to address, e.g., unemployed, self-employed, employed, entrepreneurs etc., and the possible influencers of the initiative(s) e.g., family and caregivers, investors, educational institutions, NGOs etc. Based on the context of the gap studied, other groups that are not currently listed may be included.

6 Age Groups

'Age group' is a guiding lens to select the target age group for which an intervention is intended.

Assess the participation of women and girls across different age groups and identify the pain points and restrictions faced across these groups.

The categories under this lens can help identify distinctive characteristics of specific age groups, to help understand pain points, and devise initiative(s) based on the maturity levels, and specific needs of the target group(s). Age groups considered can include e.g., Child (5-12), Adolescence (13-18), Young Adult (19-30), Adult (31-45), Middle Aged (46-64), and Senior (65 and above).

THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK **LENSES AND CATEGORIES** | A DEEP DIVE (3/5)

PURPOSE

REASONING

CATEGORIES

7 Nature of Work and Seniority

'Nature or work and seniority' is a guiding lens to break the age group further by the type of skill set, education and experience levels, and exposure of the target groups.

Understand where a gap/challenge is faced by the concerned target audience for e.g. a woman entrepreneur or employee's lifecycle. Study the different challenges faced across the stages throughout their career.

The categories cover the seniority of women and girls based on their education, skills, and exposure across various levels, from internship, trainee, entry-level, mid-level management, senior-level management, and executive positions, and as entrepreneurs.

8 Gaps and Challenges Observed

'Gaps and challenges observed' is a guiding lens to highlighting specific gaps, challenges, and barriers that need to be addressed through potential/proposed initiative(s).

Study the detailed gaps to understand the nuances and critical challenges. It is important to study the gaps within the broad categories identified e.g. access/digital divide include several gaps/challenges/barriers for example, access divide in using mobile phones, computers, internet, telecommunication, electricity, and other enablers. It is also important to note that certain gaps may be correlated or interlinked for example, socio-economic and cultural factors may lead to inherent and generational biases within the target group(s) being studied which may be the root cause for the access and digital divide, in leadership inclusion, among others.

The categories aim to focus the potential initiative(s) to address specific challenges facing women including financial/ workforce/ leadership inclusion, skills and knowledge, funding scarcity, access and digital divide, cybersecurity, socio-economic and cultural factors, legislation and regulation gaps and biases etc.

9 Implementation Medium/Channel

'Implementation medium/channel' is a guiding lens to identify the best suited medium and channel for the formulation and implementation of the proposed initiative(s).

Study the most effective medium/channel to roll-out the initiative(s) based on the lenses and categories selected above, and also in line with the scope and reach intended for the initiative(s).

The categories range from online, to hybrid/phygital, to the physical mediums. Based on the chosen medium, specific channels can be utilized to implement the initiative e.g., a mobile app, a digital platform, physical university course, e-commerce, or a social media campaign.

THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK **LENSES AND CATEGORIES** | A DEEP DIVE (4/5)

PURPOSE

REASONING

CATEGORIES

10 Enablers

'Enablers' is a guiding lens to identify the key enablers/ enabling factors that can be leveraged to implement the proposed initiative(s) effectively and efficiently.

Map the key enablers/enabling factors to effectively capitalize on existing resources and structures to deliver maximum impact.

The categories of enablers range from family and community support to funding, to healthcare access, networking and mentorship, to education and literacy, to partnerships, to conducive policies and regulations, to government support and incentives, to business incubation and acceleration, to Digital Public Goods and infrastructure, to childcare support, to cultural support, and others based on their relevance to the scope and magnitude of the proposed initiative(s).

11 Deliverables

'Deliverables' is a guiding lens highlighting the possible nature of initiatives along with their outcomes and action(s) to address the identified gaps and challenges. The action taken to address the gaps can be for example, in the form of a toolkit, database, education program, legislation etc.

Based on the above selected categories and identified enablers, the final deliverable(s) and actions should be identified for the proposed initiative(s) to deliver tangible results. Deliverables and actions should be impactful, sustainable, and implementable e.g., a law or regulation to mandate a certain percentage of women in the ICT workforce.

Categories could include research and white papers, education programs, toolkits and platforms, leadership development programs, scholarships and grants, government support and incentives, impact funds and social VCs, recognition and awards, national strategies, policies and regulations, workplace diversity programs, and gender-inclusive AI/ML models etc. Categories can be further broken down e.g., mentorship program can be in the form of an e-mentorship platform.

12 Funding Magnitude and Sources

'Funding Magnitude and Sources' is a guiding lens for assessing the magnitude of the funds required and identification/ short-listing of the funding source(s) to reach the scale and target groups when scoping the deliverables.

Based on the final short-listed enablers, deliverables, and the final scope of the initiative(s), the funding magnitude and sources to meet the scale and scope will need to be studied. This means exploring the possible national and supra-national funding avenues and sources, especially whose objectives are aligned with the proposed initiative(s).

Based on the required scope and the funding amount, the source of funding could include Public-Private Partnerships, development banks, Corporate Social Responsibility funds, NGOs, philanthropic foundations, multilateral organizations, government grants, impact accelerators and incubators, and crowdfunding etc.

THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK **LENSES AND CATEGORIES** | A DEEP DIVE (5/5)

PURPOSE

REASONING

CATEGORIES

13 UNSDGs Impacted

'United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) Impacted' lens provides guidance to identify the positive role the proposed initiative(s) can play in accelerating progress on the UN SDGs, especially the ones that are directly relevant to women's empowerment in the digital economy.

Evaluate the impact of the proposed initiative(s) to achieve UN SDGs through the initiative. Also, measure the broader impact on gender equality and sustainable development.


Various SDGs can be positively impacted through Women Empowerment in and through ICT Initiatives. These include e.g. SDG 5 – Gender Equality, SDG 8 – Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 4 – Quality Education, 10 – Reduced Inequalities etc.

14 National/ Organizational Goals and Objectives Impacted

The 'National/ organizational goals and objectives impacted' lens guides identification of the national ambitions, strategic goals, and organizational objectives that can be fulfilled through the proposed initiative(s), and to assess the impact of initiatives towards achieving the goals and mission of the implementing nation or organization.

Assess the expected impact and outcome of the initiative(s) towards achieving the national/organizational ambitions, strategic goals, and objectives.

The planned initiative may help achieve national/ organizational goals e.g., economic equity and inclusion, social innovation and entrepreneurship, job creation and employment, cooperation on development assistance, diversity, and inclusion etc. For DCO, goals set in its Strategic Roadmap 2030 are Thriving Cross-Border Digital Market, Data-Driven Digital Economy, Responsible Digital Economy.

15 Operationalize and Measure

'Operationalize and measure' is a guiding lens to plan for the different moving parts to detail the initiative and ensure the targeted expectations are effectively achieved through the operations. The initiative's measurement must also be planned to provide monitoring and accountability.

To bring the initiative to life and roll it out, understand the different activities, and plan for the details of the initiative based on the funding expected/received and the scale targeted.

Categories include multiple elements required to detail the design of initiative(s), and measurement of the impact. These include key activities, delivery timelines, stakeholders, teams, contingencies, KPIs, milestones, reporting and monitoring, and outcomes etc.

APPLICATION OF THE UNIFIED FRAMEWORK | ILLUSTRATIVE USE CASES

The illustrative use cases mentioned below outline how the Unified Framework can be leveraged to formulate impactful initiatives for empowerment of women in and through ICT.

Use Case 1 — National Initiative to Enhance Women’s Financial Inclusion through a Literacy Program

This initiative was designed to:

- 1) Enhance women's financial inclusion through a literacy program.
- 2) Enable women to access financial literacy programs in an accessible way.
- 3) Allow women the opportunity to gain the skills needed to empower them to enter the workforce.

Coverage and Scope	Geographical Landscape	Economic and Human Capital Status	Sectors Impacted	Target and Influencing Groups	Age Groups, Nature of Work and Seniority
<p>What is the scale of the organization? Where is their presence and interest? What will be the coverage area and scope of the initiative?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the scope and scale of the initiative (s) [based on the presence, interest, and beneficiaries.]• Narrow down coverage based on whether the organization is interested in national, sub-national, or local initiatives.• For example, the organization is looking to implement national-level initiative(s).	<p>Which region/country are we studying?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study issues relating to gender equality in [region of interest.]• Short-list a nation based on the topic-specific focus, e.g., financial inclusion [topic of interest.]• Narrow down on [country of interest] based on research across macro factors. For example, less than half of women in the selected country have an account with a financial institution, compared to two-thirds of men.	<p>How is the region that we are studying placed in terms of its income and literacy levels of women?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Study the income and education levels of the women/girls in the selected country.• Identify the vulnerable economic groups where financial inclusion is low, including digital financial inclusion.• Evaluate data and literature on digital literacy, financial literacy, wage digitalization, skill gaps, internet and mobile penetration, and rural v/s urban disparities in gender, among others.	<p>Which sectors need support? Which sector are the initiatives for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short-list [sectors of interest] based on the [sectors impacted] and directly linked to the information identified.• For example, We short-list the Banking and Financial Services sector to solve for financial inclusion and financial literacy related issues.	<p>What are the target and influencing group(s)? How are they positioned? Which groups are of need support?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short-list the target group(s) that are in urgent need of banking and financial services access. Influencing groups include Banks and Government in the nation.• For example, we short-list groups where the percentage of women without bank accounts is less than the country average.	<p>Which age groups does the challenge affect? What stage of their career are they in?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on the target group identified, we further review the group through an age, seniority, and career lens.• For example, women who are self-employed and unemployed girls and women across age groups 18 and above in the selected country are the most vulnerable within the target group.• We then study the group’s challenges and gaps to understand the root causes.

Gaps and Challenges Observed	Implementation Medium/Channel	Enablers and Deliverables	Funding Magnitude and Sources	UNSDGs & National/ Org. Goals/ Objectives Impacted	Operationalize and Measure
<p>What is the key challenge being faced? What is the root cause of the issue?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In our current scenario, access and lack of knowledge of financial services are identified as critical gaps for the target group i.e., self-employed and unemployed women in the selected country. • To further deep dive, a significant challenge identified among women in the target group is the lack of financial inclusion due to a lack of basic financial planning and banking literacy. 	<p>What medium/channel can we use to solve the gap?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the best-fit medium to solve the short-listed gap based on a cost-benefit analysis. • In this case, an online-only option will be most suited to reach a larger audience and to scale. • Mobile phones and social media would be relevant and cost-effective to disseminate information quickly. 	<p>What enablers are based on the chosen medium? What is the tangible output?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outline enablers to solve the short-listed challenges by enhancing financial literacy and access. • After evaluating different options, we short-list education and literacy as a key enabler and education programs as a key deliverable. • We proceed with disseminating basic financial knowledge through YouTube, WhatsApp, and SMS in the local language of the selected country target group(s). 	<p>Who will fund the initiative(s) based on the expected scope and scale?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To achieve the deliverable based on the scope and scale, we evaluate the potential funding sources. • We short-list the most relevant funding sources, e.g., CSR-based funding from Banks/Financial Services. 	<p>Which UNSDGs and the organization's goals is it aligned to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the potential UNSDGs and organization flagship goals we intend to achieve through this initiative. 	<p>How can it be brought to life? What is the scope?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operationalize the initiative by planning key activities of designing a course curriculum to educate about financial literacy via Whatsapp/YouTube and engage in potential partnerships to roll-out the initiative. • Determine other aspects, such as timelines to roll out the initiative, e.g., a short-term, accelerated roll-out. • Measure effectiveness using KPIs such as the number of women reached, the number of bank accounts opened, etc.

Use Case 2 — A Regional Initiative to Provide Postnatal Support for the Working Women

This initiative was designed to:

- 1) Assist maternity leave recipients in juggling their postpartum schedules.
- 2) Enable women to stay in the workforce after having children.
- 3) Give caregivers work opportunities to better empower them financially.
- 4) Allow women to pursue mid-to upper-level positions with sufficient support at home.

Coverage and Scope	Geographical Landscape	Economic and Human Capital Status	Sectors Impacted	Target and Influencing Groups	Age Groups, Nature of Work and Seniority
<p>What is the scale of the organization? Where is their presence and interest? What will be the coverage area and scope of the initiative?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A Multilateral organization working to support women post-maternity break.• Regional-level coverage and scope based on the presence and interest of the organization and its beneficiaries.	<p>Which region/country are we studying?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of post natal support has been identified as a global issue for working women.• Relevant regions include Middle East, Africa, and Asia where the problem is exasperated.	<p>How is the region we are studying placed in terms of its income and literacy levels of women?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opportunity to provide working women with caretakers to provide support post-pregnancy and transition back to work in a smooth manner.• While the problem is widespread, urban upper-middle-income women are short-listed as lack of post-natal care hinders their career progression.	<p>Which sectors need support? Which sector are the initiatives for?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The opportunity is sector agnostic since the it is relevant for any women on maternity break looking to re-enter the workforce.	<p>What are the target and influencing group(s)? How are they positioned? Which groups are of need support?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Target Groups: Self-employed Entrepreneurs Employees at private organizations or Government organizations Caregivers• Influencing Groups: Support structure /caregivers (including family) Multi-lateral organization(s) Corporates Regional and National Governments	<p>Which age groups does the challenge affect? What stage of their career are they in?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 50-18 age groups• Mid-level management• Senior-level management• Entrepreneur

Gaps and Challenges Observed	Implementation Medium/Channel	Enablers and Deliverables	Funding Magnitude and Sources	UNSDGs & National/ Org. Goals/ Objectives Impacted	Operationalize and Measure
<p>What are the key challenges being faced? What is the cause?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gap in Workforce inclusion • Limited women leaders in the workforce • Lack of support for women to progress in their career post-maternity break. 	<p>What medium/channel can we use to solve the gap?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phygital • Technology Leveraged: Website/ Platform Data insights and analytics AI-enabled chatbot API Technology Mobile 	<p>What enablers are based on the chosen medium? What is the tangible output?</p> <p>Enablers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare support from the workplace • Pipeline and training of caretakers • Marketing and outreach Deliverables • Toolkits and platforms Website and mobile application features to include: Customer ratings and reviews User-friendly interface Discounts and loyalty programs Live chat support Accessibility features Education resources and 'how to' guides/handbook 	<p>Who will fund the action based on the expected scope and scale?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public-Private Partnership • PE/VC funding and guidance • Government allocated budgets • Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) / International foundations 	<p>Is it aligned to UNSDGs and the organization's flagship actions?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNSDGs Impacted: Gender equality • Decent work and economic growth • Reduced inequalities <p>DCO Flagship Actions Impacted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better digital skills and jobs • Positive digital 	<p>How can it be brought to life? What is the scope?</p> <p>Implementation Timelines</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 to 18 months <p>KPIs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Turnaround of time for women to re-join work. • Number of women recruited as caregivers. • Increased participation of women in the workforce <p>Stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women returning to work post maternity leave • Corporations • Maternity caretakers and nurses



CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, the DCO's proposed Unified Framework on 'Empowering Women in and through ICT' serves as an invaluable tool and structured guide for governments, corporates, NGOs, and multilateral organizations seeking to design and deliver impactful initiatives or develop actionable recommendations to enhance women's participation in the digital economy. The framework comprises 15 lenses, each encompassing several categories, covering essential aspects such as the coverage and scope of initiatives, economic landscape, age groups, nature of work, challenges observed, key enablers and deliverables of potential women empowerment in and through ICT initiatives.

This comprehensive approach ensures that all relevant factors are considered, and the initiatives are tailored to the specific needs and contexts of the target women groups. With this framework, stakeholders can confidently navigate the complexities of women's empowerment in the digital economy, driving meaningful and sustainable change.

The Unified Framework is designed to be flexible and adaptable, allowing for customization to suit the specific needs and priorities of different contexts and populations. It is a comprehensive and holistic approach to women's empowerment in the digital economy, providing a roadmap for action and a guide for success to enable digital prosperity for all.

